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Mumford On City Planning

THE URBAN PROSPECT. By Lewis Mumford. Longmans Canada; 255 pages; $7.50

REVIEWED BY ROY KERVIN

LEWIS MUMFORD has been studying, and writing about, town planning for most of a half-century and in that time he has become something of a prophet as well as a major authority in his field.

His role as a prophet has not been a happy one, because the principles he has been advocating for many years have largely been ignored and it is his warnings of dire results that have come true. In some rare cases though, planning has been carried out according to his rules.

Mumford is a wordy man, inclined to sentences with many conditional phrases, and this book is made up of disconnected articles and speeches over the last dozen years. So basic principles are often blurred in talky exposition, and there is an unavoidable amount of repetition.

The ideas, however, are worth digging for, even if few of them are expressed simply or quotably.

Mumford's major principle is that the solution for the cities does not lie in building more high-rise "slabs"; nor does it lie in running away to the new suburbs, which soon produce their own problems and congestions.

He believes cities should be developed into "neighborhoods", almost entirely self-contained, each including its own employment areas, education, shopping, entertainment and services.

Almost everything the citizen needs would be found within walking distance. He would only have to go to the city centre for those functions and services which only a metropolis can supply.

"Neighborhood unit organization seems the only answer to the giantism and inefficiency of the overcentralized metropolis. To preserve specialized institutions for their unique and specific services, which should be available to the whole region, they must be relieved of the heavy burden of performing, in addition, purely parochial functions. There would be no place for the scholar in the Central Library in New York if there were not local libraries, united into a metropolitan system, in every district in the city."

Another example Mumford offers is the great central hospitals, a long trip away from most of the people they serve.

". . . some fatal inertia has kept our hospital services in an antiquated centralized pattern, and has prevented the creation of small nursing homes, close at hand for family and neighborly visitors, who could, if the hospital were conveniently at hand, take over no small part of the otherwise prohibitive expensive nursing service."

Ideal planning for such neighborhoods, or for "New Towns" outside the present cities, would provide "an environment suited to every phase of life and growth, from infancy to senescence" whereas most city planning today is geared to the needs of adults in business only.

Mumford's proposals for the neighborhood community combine happily with his arguments against the highway engineer's adoration of the automobile.

He points out that mass transportation systems can move forty to sixty thousand people per hour along a single route "whereas our best expressways, using far more space, cannot move more than four to six thousand cars" — at an average of 1.5 persons in each car. The difference is roughly 10 to one.

But the more expressways into the city the engineers build, the more car owners are tempted to use their cars on them and to desert the mass transportation systems. This is why more expressways only lead to still more, "obviously the most costly and inefficient means of handling the peak hours of traffic" with the foreseeable end being "a tomb of concrete roads and ramps covering the dead corpse of a city."

The forgotten key to city traffic congestion is the pedestrian.

"For open spaces, long distances, and low densities, the car is now essential; for urban space, short distances, and high densities, the pedestrian." Mumford points out that 50,000 people an hour used to move across London Bridge — on foot. And he points to the attractive pedestrian areas being built in Rotterdam, Coventry, Philadelphia, Zurich.

Mumford does not concentrate particularly on the racial problems of American cities; he declares that slum congestion always produces violence and that the racial factor only intensifies this result.

Mumford's proposals are large and expensive — but no larger, no more expensive than the problems. And his proposals make excellent sense.

They Do Not Arrive In Time
(From "The Disasters of War" by Francisco Goya, General Publishing; $2.10 (paperback)— this Dover edition reproduces in its entirety the first edition of Goya's "Los Desastres de la Guerra, Madrid, 1863.)

Portrait Of Egypt

WINGS OF THE FALCON. By Joseph Kaster. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 302 pages, $10.30.

With a nice sense of what will have an appeal to the ordinary reader, Joseph Kaster has studied documents which have survived over the past 4,000 years, to produce a most amazingly comprehensive, yet concise, treatise on life and thought in ancient Egypt. To use modern phraseology, it might be termed "Instant Egypt."

Within these pages will be found something of everything pertaining to that mysterious, fascinating country. A glance at the table of contents will reveal how widespread and thorough has been the task which Mr. Kaster has not only undertaken, but has succeeded very thoroughly in accomplishing. For instance, there is: Decipherment of the Hieroglyphics and the Progress of Egyptology; Religion; Literature; The Creation, which is broken down into the Theology of Heliopolis and that of Memphis; there is a fine section devoted to "Instructions and Maxims" and another to "Social Upheaval and World Weariness" which will find a responsive echo in the world of today. But lest the reader become discouraged by the very thought that such conditions even existed in those days, there follows a section on: "The Goodness of Life: Lyric Poetry and Song." It could be forgiven to anyone who would skim lightly through the former and dwell hopefully on the latter.

Then comes "Tales of Magic, Adventure and Humor". But perhaps one of the most fascinating bits deals with the interpretation of dreams. It may be that the questing reader will find here some parallel between these manifestations, and explanations which are offered by the modern-day psychoanalyst to the anxious patient on his couch.

For good measure, there are several remedies, in the form of incantations, which are suggested for the cure of chronic migraine. Some of them might be a little difficult to follow. The one, for instance, has "to be recited over a crocodile of clay with grain in its mouth, and having an eye of faience set in its head", might be awkward; crocodiles, whether of clay or any other substance, not being usually readily available.

With tireless patience, Joseph Kaster has produced a most valuable portrait of the Egyptian way of life. There is wisdom and beauty, and not a little humor. To many, it will be the introduction to a land about which far too little has been known and appreciated.

HELEN GUITON

Poetical Prose

THE SWALLOWER SWALLOWED. By Rejean Ducharme. Hamish Hamilton. 237 pages, $6.50.

HERE IS A thin line between a best seller and a failure. And there is a thin line between a good work and a merely readable one. Rejean Ducharme's work might not attain the lofty eminence of best-sellerdom, but it is definitely on the "good work" side of the latter-mentioned continuum. It is a work of superb craftsmanship, the words flowing . . . indeed, this very fact might be what will hold it back—this is not an ordinary book. The language is lyric—poetry arranged as prose—music . . .

The "swallower" is Bernice Einberg, swallowing, and being swallowed in turn by, the world.

We follow Bernice for a time as she grows up—sort of —and moves across the world: Canada, New York, Israel . . . and we see her particular dilemma — Father: Jewish; Mother: Catholic; brother, Christian: Catholic; Bernice: Jewish. Or to word this more correctly, Christian belongs to her mother, and Bernice to her father, by prior parental arrangement. And her parents hate each other, and she hates them both.

As I have mentioned, in language this is virtually a prose-poem. Consider a line of Bernice's: — "I look up at the sky, and try to explain to myself the gloomy effervescence it sends to my head, the anxiety and intoxication it sets all my body aflame with . . . A bank of cloud wide as a pier and black as jet towers above the horizon like glowing ramparts stemming the violent onslaughts of the autumn dusk. We are besieged. The heavens are about to be invaded."

Ducharme's writing flows, moves you with it, teases, creeps in and out. Hopefully, this really is an accurate rendition of his style and wording, and not just a free interpretation of his work. If the English is a close approximation of the original French, then we have here a writer of merit, one who may not reach the pinnacle of commercial best-sellerdom, but one who will, definitely, win an expanding circle of readers.

SAMUEL CLEMENT

Relationships

THE PRICE. By Artuhr Miller. Macmillan; 116 pages, $5.50

Arthur Miller's new play, the big dramatic hit of the current Broadway season, takes him into areas that are quite new to him in the theatre. "The Price" is a study of two brothers who have lived their adult lives away from each other. They come together briefly, for the duration of the play, and then go their separate ways.

The play is really an examination of how and why people live the way they do. It poses questions and offers no solutions, which has left a great many New York playgoers puzzled and angry, but most important it has turned a searchlight on family relationships with a fierceness that is quite new for Miller.

The two brothers are obviously fond of each other in spite of their estrangement. They are completely different, naturally. One has lived all his life convinced that he has sacrificed his own possibly brilliant career for his father and his brother. At the end of the play he has a quite new view of what actually took place. So has the other brother. The self-knowledge that each of the protagonists achieves is staggering, and at the end of the play the reader is as drained emotionally as are the characters.

Miller takes no sides in this play. There are no blacks and whites. Everything and everyone is a dirty grey. Even innocent bystanders do not emerge untarnished.

The play has a strength and a feeling of truth rare in contemporary theatre. It is certainly the most compelling piece of American playwriting in a very long time.

JACOB SISKIND

A Dark Corner

A MAN'S BLESSING. By Leonardo Sciascia. Fitzhenry and Whiteside; 146 pages, $5.75.

ONE FATEFUL AFTERNOON, the pharmacist of a small Sicilian village received an anonymous letter, telling him that to avenge what he had done, he would die. Momentarily confused, the pharmacist then proceeded to regard the letter as a gross joke, and to treat it as such when talking to his friends.

Then, on an August day, he went hunting with his friend, Dr. Roscio. A short time later, they are both found shot to death. As the police dig into the case, the obvious possibilities are rapidly ruled out: the pharmacist had no affair that could be discovered, had apparently wronged no one, why was he killed? It remained for Professor Laurana, a quiet, timid teacher, probing deeper, and using clues the police had ignored as valueless, to discover the truth, that it was the doctor, and not the pharmacist, whose death had really been desired, and the startling facts which he unearths bring a most stunning fate down on the professor.

This novel, though short, is a tight, compelling story. It is a tale of complexities, of the intricacies of life, a tale of truths, half-truths, and buried truths. It is a picture of a clash between the unworldly, philosophical professor, and the complex, and brutal, realities of society. The reality described here is, perhaps, frightening to admit to, but, when one stops to consider it, is not one which is limited to Sicily—although it might be taken to its most complex extremes there — but is found everywhere. There is more revealed than a Sicilian landscape; a dark corner of all society is exposed.

SAMUEL CLEMENT

Dropout

THE DISCIPLE. By Clark Brown. Macmillan: 282 pages, $7.25.

The American obsession with identity crises provides Clark Brown with the theme of his first novel. There is, of course, absolutely nothing wrong with this for it is a theme that has provided the basis for countless artistically satisfying novels.

Unfortunately, however, the protagonist of this particular work, a college dropout by the name of Gordon Graves, is a loutish and, not to mince words about it, a stupid an callow young man with whom the reader finds it impossible to identify and difficult to sustain even a clinical interest in. Sharing the European stage, for that is where the novel is set, is George Schroder, a club-footed "professor" whose disciple Groves becomes, and Mil, Schroder's wife, a completely unbelievable amalgam of neuroses with whom Gordon eventually beds down in romantic Spain.

By novel's end Gordon has experienced a little much needed growing up but he remains a long way from solving the problem of identity with which the novel is primarily concerned.

Clark writes competently, albeit without any significant amount of imagination, and his plotting is perfectly acceptable. It is in the realm of character that his first novel flounders. I is to be hoped that he will have licked this particular problem by the time his second novel, on which he is already working, reaches the bookstores.

E. GEORGE COCHRANE

Mailer As Hero

ARMIES OF THE NIGHT. By Norman Mailer. New American Library, $5.95 (U.S.).

No one captures and observes the American moral and social neurosis more meticulously and with such verve than Norman Mailer. It is for precisely this reason that Mailer is a hero for some and a devil to others. His detractors feel that his bravura and lusty language are completely irrelevant,

NORMAN MAILER

that a giant talent is wasting his time. His latest book, "Armies of the Night," should dispel these accusations — at least temporarily. In it he saves the October march on the Pentagon from oblivion and focuses upon a group of people participating in the march to point out the reasons for the many wrongdoings of American society.

Most of the book is written in the format of a novel, with Mailer as our genial hero, and supporting roles being played by poet Robert Lowell and critic Dwight MacDonald. We follow Norman as he accepts a telephoned request to lead the march, as he gives a drunken speech to fellow marchers, as he is arrested for transgressing a police line, as he spends the night in jail. All of this provides the reader with fine entertainment, to be sure, but Mailer's tale is told with such insight and complexity that "Armies" is a worthwhile reading experience. Mailer writes caustically of his "weekend revolutionaries" but not without sympathy. He examines the Military Policeman, whose face looks like "every small American town." He dwells on his ever-changing relationship with Lowell, and admits to some devastating human fallibilities.

Many feel that Mailer is simply obsessed with himself and that each of his books is a self-advertisement. They point out that the various obscenities he frequently employs are nothing more than exercises in sensationalism. To this, I would suggest that Mailer is not egotistical at all (Truman Capote could easily win this award) but that he is most aware of himself in relation to his society. No one is more revealing about Norman than Norman himself. In his hands he emerges as a gallant, vigorous, slightly useless, almost pathetic figure. It is his infamous style and wit that wins the day. As a writer, Mailer is demanding, sensitive and profound; at his best, he is without peer, and "Armies of the Night" is his best book in years.

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

A Mixed Bag

CANADIAN WINTER'S TALES. Edited by Norman Levine. Macmillan; 172 pages, $4.25.

There is no more demanding literary form than the short story, a fact of which one is rather painfully reminded while reading this slender anthology compiled by Norman Levine during his tenure as writer in residence at the University of New Brunswick. This is not to say that the book is completely disappointing. Morley Callaghan contributes a perceptive and emotionally satisfying vignette of young love, the sort of thing he does with consummate artistry.

And Brian Moore, who at one time worked as a reporter for this newspaper, succeeds in conveying something of the poignancy of an Irish emigrant who is torn between the demands placed upon him by his North American wife and those represented by his Irish uncle.

But the remainder of the "Canadian tales" that comprise this collection can most charitably be described as a mixed bag. Malcolm Lowry's "Under the Volcano," which he later developed into a novel, sparkles with some brilliant description but staggers under a load of symbolism that is too heavy for such a fragile vehicle as a short story to carry.

Hugh Hood's "The End Of It" is a prolix saga of a National Film Board employee that would have benefitted from drastic editorial pruning. The distaff side is represented by Margaret Lawrence ("A Bird in the House") and Mavis Gallant ("The End of the World"). Both reveal a certain empathy but are marred, and seriously, by sentimentality and stilted dialogue. Ethel Wilson's "Mr. Sleepwalker" is one of the most original stories in the book but it, too, would have been improved by astute excision.

Mordecai Richler's "Playing Ball on Hampstead Heath" is populated with a cast of unlovable characters sufficiently numerous to people a novel. This is, perhaps, the most disappointing story in the entire anthology. From Richler we have come to expect something superior.

That leaves Norman Levine's "I'll Bring You Back Something Nice," a skillfully etched portrait of a Canadian-born literary failure in England, the part of the world that Levine now calls home.

As I say, it's a mixed bag.

E. GEORGE COCHRANE

German Codebreaking Success

LONDON— (AP) —Initial German superiority in code-breaking and other forms of intelligence almost brought disaster to the Allies in the first half of the Second World War, says author Donald McLachan, who served high up in British navel intelligence.

It wasn't until 1943 that the British navy finally overcame a "tragic and shocking failure of signal security" that gave German U-boats a rich harvest of sunken supply ships, says McLachlan in his book "Room 39", the story of British wartime naval intelligence.

The book, published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson, lifts the cover on a number of hitherto unknown secret incidents: The weakness of British intelligence; the failure of commanders to take advantage of secret information and the reluctance of the British naval staff to give up old-fashioned hand-made ciphers for more secure electronic machines.

McLachlan, former Sunday Telegraph editor who served on the personal staff of the naval intelligence director during the war, says the battle of wireless wits began in 1936 when a British squadron in the Mediterranean began using codes in its watch on Italian preparations to invade Abyssinia.

The result was a "cryptanalyst's feast" for German agents. Call signs were easily identified and key words and phrases regularly repeated.

By HAROLD MORRISON

The Germans built up a coding pattern that later provided a wartime window on routes, positions and travel times of Atlantic and other convoys.

Until the Allies finally seized the upper hand in code-breaking in 1943, German U-boats were able to sink 11,500,000 tons of supply in the North Atlantic alone, "to say nothing of the humiliation and losses of the Norway campaign of 1940 and other episodes." So "deplorable" was the state of Atlantic convoy codes that German intelligence was able to detect their full meaning after only the briefest intervals. By October, 1942, the Germans had cracked another cipher so quickly that sometimes German U-boat headquarters had the information 10 to 20 hours in advance of Allied movement.

McLachlan's major argument is that Britain must never again be allowed to sink into apathy in wireless and other forms of intelligence.

"Indeed, it is important that not only the servicemen of the future but also the civil servants and politicians and formers of public opinion should realize how important is this branch of intelligence to the organization of peace, whether by power working against power or by international groups," he writes.

McLachlan maintains that since fighting commanders are likely to ignore or underrate intelligence, intelligence departments should be directed mainly by civilians.

Earl Mountbatten, wartime Chief of Combined Operations, disagrees. Writing a foreword to the book, Mountbatten maintains there must be an active body of military officers in intelligence "not only to supply the necessary technical specialist knowledge but also to spread a proper understanding of intelligence throughout the services when they go back to normal duties."

Linguistic History

LANGUAGES IN CONFLICT. By Richard J. Joy. Published by the Athor. Appendices and 70 Statistical Tables. 145 pages. $6.00.

This linguistic history of Canada, based on census records, has for its theme the profound effect that the two-century-old French and English language conflict has had on our political and economic development.

Linguistic segregation, the author points out, is increasing at an accelerating rate. The English speaking population of Quebec is fading away (except at Montreal) and the French language is hardly ever heard outside an area bounded on the west by a line from Sault Ste. Marie through Ottawa to Cornwall and on the east by a line from Edmunston to Moncton.

This thoroughly researched and documented book was the outgrowth of a paper the author presented in French during the 1962 meeting of lIAssociation canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences.

It is a valuable and extremely timely study of a subject that will interest both English and French political scientists, sociologists, marketing analysts in Government, universities and industry.

EILEEN GOODMAN

Youth Versus Age

CONFESSIONS OF A PEOPLE LOVER. By Paul Ritchie. General Publishing, 157 pages, $5.25.

The problem of overpopulation has been with us for a long time and is considered one of the more important challenges of today. Paul Ritchie apparently accepts the challenge of projecting himself into the future to examine the methods adopted by society to solve the problem of longevity.

Collie Henry is the main character in this novel. He is an old man who has succeeded in evading the authorities through the use of a set of false teeth and a wig, and through the wifely protection of Pudge, a woman who had watched her parents suffer the punishment of all the longlivers of the day. Eventually Collie is unmasked, and is scheduled to suffer the fate of death in the Reduction Chamber.

The story revolves around Collie's reminiscences on the eve of his death. He is permitted a final night of pleasure, and is locked in a cell with a beautiful 17 year old prostitute. But even this final feast of the flesh is part of his suffering, for he fails. For his lack, he is subject to the wrath of the young woman who finally subjects him to the physical punishment, which it was the duty of the young to inflict upon all longlivers. This night, he reflects upon his life, from the pecadilloes of his childhood to the present, and he introduces us to a life spent in the pursuit of pleasure, and finally in the deception of the Shadow Police who sought out the aged for destruction.

There is a strong poetic tendency in the presentation of this work which examines the conflict between youth and age. The style produces a wandering and disjointed effect, but it is in keeping, perhaps, with the fluctuating thoughts of a man about to die and faced wih sufficient physical evidence of the loss of his cherished manhood.

In this second novel, it is inconceivable that Paul Ritchie had any designs of producing a best seller. But despite any non-acceptance of the author's visions of the future, the work must be regarded as an honest thought thrown out to man, maybe even a warning, and it has been well presented.

CALVIN PREDDIE.

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